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DEPARTMENT FOR DEPUTY SENIOR ADVISOR ON IRAQ DEUTSCH

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [DA](#) [IO](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR COALITION CONSULTATIONS WITH
DENMARK - APRIL 7

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JAMES P. CAIN, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary. Embassy warmly welcomes S/I Deputy Deutsch and the interagency team for the April 7 coalition consultations with the Danish government. Despite flagging domestic support for the military effort in Iraq, implacable parliamentary opposition and the shock of Mohammed cartoon crisis, the government of PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen is committed to remaining in the multinational coalition in Iraq. To keep its participation politically viable, the Danish government must reconfigure and calibrate Denmark's contributions, which it wants to do in sync with U.S. and UK adjustments to the evolving security situation on the ground. The government also needs to be seen by the public as being a true and full partner in discussing these adjustments. You will have a real opportunity to shape Danish decision-making in Iraq for the coming year. Your meetings will help Danish officials prepare the strongest possible case for continued and effective engagement in Iraq, and reassure them that there will be "no surprises" in coalition deployments. In addition, your media outreach will demonstrate the USG's continued commitment to coordinate closely with partners in Iraq. End Summary.

Commitment at the Top

¶2. (C) From PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen on down, the Danish government remains firmly committed to extending Denmark's contributions in Iraq. Rasmussen continues to declare that Danish troops will remain deployed in Iraq as long as the UN mandate exists, the Iraqi government requests it, and Danish troops are making a difference. You and your interagency team will meet with the Danish officials most involved in securing continued parliamentary support for Denmark's deployment of 500-plus troops in Iraq from July 1 to the end of 2006.

¶3. (C) As they contemplate the composition and duration of the deployment, these officials want to ensure that the needs-based evolution of their contributions is in sync with U.S. and UK adjustments. All your interlocutors welcome this opportunity for a full and transparent dialogue on the way ahead in Iraq. After your consultations, a Danish interagency group will begin drafting a "white paper" that will frame the upcoming parliamentary and public debate on renewal.

Policy Formation and Parliamentary Maneuvering

14. (C) The Danish government faces a tough political challenge in securing a broad majority for an extension through the end of 2006. Following publication of its "white paper," the government will introduce the extension resolution to parliament in early May. There will be committee hearings and two parliamentary readings/debates of the government's mandate extension proposal in mid and late May. The readings will be followed by a full parliamentary vote in late May, prior to the early June summer recess. The two largest opposition parties, the Social Democrats and Social Liberals, have declared they will not vote for any further extensions. With opinion surveys charting diminishing public support for the Danish role in Iraq, the opposition parties are playing to their core constituents, who opposed the initial intervention in Iraq. It appears unlikely that they can be turned around on this vote, but the Prime Minister is not going to allow the opposition to dictate Iraq policy.

15. (C) If the mainstream opposition parties do withdraw their support, the government will have to rely on a narrow parliamentary majority to ram through the resolution, a contentious maneuver in the consensus-oriented Danish parliamentary tradition. It would depend on the support of the anti-immigrant Danish People's Party (DPP) to extend the deployment. DPP leader Pia Kjaersgaard recently told us that, for now, she will continue to support the Prime Minister's Iraq policy. However, DPP leaders as well as rank and file are growing increasingly uncomfortable with the Iraq mission. At the political level, the maneuvering will be delicate. At the policy level, there is considerable pressure to shape Denmark's contributions into a package that can win parliamentary approval.

16. (C) In this light, Danish officials have said they intend to emphasize training, assistance, and civilian roles in Denmark's contributions in Iraq. Denmark will participate in the British-led PRT in Basrah, including with civilian advisers. Denmark will continue to support NTM-I and provide police trainers. Danish military planners will be extremely interested in U.S. plans for deployments and drawdowns to ensure that Danish force trends conform to those of its ally.

Damage Control

17. (C) The crisis that erupted over the publication of cartoons depicting Mohammed poses an additional challenge to keeping Denmark engaged in the world. Denmark's worst foreign policy crisis since World War II took a psychological toll on the normally sure-footed Danes. Danish foreign policy officials are still warily picking up the pieces. With a self-image based on long-standing international acclaim as a benevolent, honest broker, Danes were shocked to see themselves portrayed as the bad guy. Your interlocutors understand the need for active Danish involvement in international affairs, but they are likely to confront a more skeptical, risk-averse public. Your consultations will help these officials focus over the horizon and remain a steady international partner.

18. (C) Denmark recently lost its third soldier in Iraq, but public reaction has been largely muted. Should Denmark suffer bigger casualty rates, maintaining political support for Denmark's efforts would be much more difficult, according to our contacts. Unable to build a solid case for its arbitrary call for a July 1 withdrawal of Danish troops in Iraq, the opposition increasingly is focusing its criticism on alleged cases of U.S. mistreatment of detainees, Guantanamo, and other human rights issues in an effort to drive a wedge between Denmark and the U.S. These issues may not be raised at the consultation table but Danish officials certainly will have to address these concerns in the "white

paper." You will have a chance to speak to these concerns on the margins of your meetings and they surely will be raised in your press interview.

19. (U) We look forward to your very timely and useful visit.
CAIN